

IX] Looking Forward



Washington State Ferries has experienced many paradigm shifts over the past two years; some were prompted internally, while others were a matter of course.

The ferry system is tackling the funding and viability of our organization in a whole new way, going from relying on the Motor Vehicle Excise Tax to recovering up to 90% of our operating costs through efficiencies and non-farebox revenues. Not wanting to rely solely on the farebox for this revenue, the ferry system is seeking creative ways of attaining the money, exploring business and profit opportunities from previously untapped sources.

WSF believes that the Business and Capital Funding Plans will allow us to generate new revenue to stabilize ferry system financing and build four new ferry vessels. The ultimate goal is to begin expanding ferry services once again; thereby increasing service for our customers and providing new jobs.

WSF has responded to the national call to tighten security. Over the past two years, WSF addressed Coast Guard regulations, State and Federal legislation on both domestic and international security requirements and new immigration laws. WSF formed a Security Committee (consisting of WSF, USCG, and WSP) to assess risks, flesh out security requirements, and formulate a compliance plan. In 2003, the Security Committee's work coalesced in a cohesive and comprehensive Security Plan that the ferry system will implement by 2004.

With this work behind us, we look forward to the days ahead, knowing that we are capable of rising to the challenges of a time when funding is seemingly ever dwindling, and security is more necessary than ever.

We know there will be challenges. And, we are ready to face them. With every challenge – either financial, safety, or operational – Washington State Ferries continues to take the opportunity to show our customers and stakeholders our ability to manage and operate the country's largest ferry system in good times and bad.

Prepared by:

Corporate Communications Department
Washington State Ferries

Eben Design
Seattle, Washington

Photography courtesy of:

Stephen J. Brown
Chris Gendron
USCG, Petty Officer 3rd Class Kurt Fredrickson